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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the effects of the changes suggested in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia (Beazley Report) and the Report of the Ministerial Working Party on School Certification and Tertiary Admissions Procedures (McGaw Report). Special attention was directed to the impact that the reports would have on the continuation or termination of Alternative Upper School (AUS) courses, their integration into normal school timetable and their success in catering to the needs of the types of students taking AUS courses in the past. Case studies were conducted on a number of schools which responded to the Beazley and McGaw recommendations in different ways. These included schools which completely abandoned existing AUS courses, those that kept AUS courses, and schools that partially integrated AUS courses within the normal school timetable. It was found that the new alternatives to AUS courses were not entirely successful in that there was a deterioration in pastoral care and that the most alienated students no longer returned to school at all. In many ways, the most successful compromise appeared to be partial integration of AUS courses into the normal school timetable. A reference list is also provided. (ML)

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ALTERNATIVE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

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INTRODUCTION

In March 1984, the Government of Western Australia received the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia (the Beazley Report, 1984) and this was followed, in April 1984, by the Report of the Ministerial Working Party on School Certification and Tertiary Admissions Procedures (the McGaw Report, 1984). In the period since 1984, the main recommendations have been debated widely and have begun to be implemented within the education system.

The major recommendation of these reports involved a restructure of the previously existing two-year upper school courses into single-year syllabuses, with the public examinations for entrance into higher education being based on the work covered in Year 12 (i.e., Grade 12) only. The aim was to encourage greater flexibility in the provision of courses which would serve the needs both of students who would choose to go on to Year 12 and possibly to higher education and of students who were seeking an extra year of schooling beyond the compulsory period. Year 11 subjects could become more broadly based, more relevant to the needs and abilities of returning students and, with the proposed changes in certification procedures, provide a more satisfactory total schooling package.

In its review of the benefits of the proposed changes, the Beazley Committee also made specific mention of courses, known as Alternative Upper School (AUS) programs, which had been in existence for some years to cater for the needs of less academically inclined Year 11 students. Beazley (1984, p. 91) wrote:

> *The need for the existence of Alternative Upper School courses and Vocational Business Studies courses as distinct entities should disappear. These subjects will be an integral part of the subject offerings available to students in Year 11 and students taking those courses will receive the same certification as their more academic counterparts.*

This statement caused consternation among the staff involved in Alternative Upper School courses because it was felt that the reported benefits accruing to the students in such courses might be lost. However, it was acknowledged that there were gains in the proposed standardized certification and in the provision of greater flexibility. The present study was initiated for the purpose of investigating what effects the recommendations of the Beazley and

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48 152

McGaw reports had on the continuation or termination of Alternative Upper School courses, their integration into the normal school timetable and their success in catering for the needs of the types of students taking AUS courses in the past.

Origins of Alternative Upper School (AUS) Courses

Prior to the introduction of Alternative Upper School courses, three streams of schooling were available to students returning to post-compulsory education in Western Australia. First, the majority of students took the two-year course leading to the external Tertiary Admissions Examination (TAE). Second, a very small minority took the less academically demanding subjects in general studies for the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE). Third, most schools also offered a well-regarded program in Vocational and Business Studies (VBS) as a one-year course designed predominantly for girls. But there existed also a group of students for whom none of these was a suitable option. Such students, who usually had a weak academic record and often a poor school attendance record throughout their period of compulsory education, wanted to return to some form of post-compulsory education because of economic circumstances, parental and peer pressure or personal recognition of their inadequate preparation for the world of work. The special provision of school-based courses for such students began in about 1973 and was widespread by 1975. These programs usually were dominated by male students and focused on the industrial arts/handyman subjects.

From 1976, schools were encouraged by the Education Department of Western Australia to offer one-year courses in Year 11 with locally relevant curriculum content and school-based accreditation and certification. These became known as Alternative Upper School (AUS) programs. By 1980, the provision of these courses warranted the establishment of the Alternative Courses Development Unit within the State Education Department. In 1982, this unit was subsumed within the Schools Transition Education Unit which also had oversight of the approval and funding of the Federal Government's Transition Education Program projects (see Fraser, 1986). Following a change in Federal Government policy in 1984, the unit was given responsibility for the management of funding under its new Participation and Equity Program (PEP) and was broadened to become the Secondary Schools Development Unit.

AUS Courses in Review

The prime thrust of the Participation and Equity Program was to encourage students to stay on beyond the period of compulsory education by making schooling more attractive through changes in curricular offerings, organizational patterns and relationships between staff and students (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1983). The interpretation of the goals of the Participation and Equity Program varied across the States, but in Western Australia the original aims of Transition Education had been cast widely and the change to a broader view was accomplished largely within the pre-1984 AUS structures. AUS courses, by their very nature, responded differently to the needs of the student clientele in each school in which they were established. Generalizations across the school system would be misleading, but developments have included the provision of "Link Courses" with nearby technical colleges and mini-enterprises based on business principles (see Fraser, 1986). As the courses received greater acceptability in the community and among the

students, the demand for them rose, more girls applied for them and the course offerings were broadened. But many of the courses still were regarded as marginal to the real efforts of schooling as perceived by the teachers, administrators and the community. AUS programs often were poorly housed in makeshift accommodation "down the back" of the school and frequently were insufficiently planned, staffed and financed. Moreover, these problems were exacerbated by the announcement by the Federal Government late in 1985 that funding for Participation and Equity Program was to be cut by half for the remainder of the triennium 1986-7.

Participation and Equity Program financing always was intended to be "seed-funding" of target projects and not on-going funding and, once a project had commenced in a school, it had a precarious financial existence (Fraser, 1986, p. 80). While many AUS courses were highly regarded and seen to have done excellent work with students previously categorized by the school system as being beyond salvation, there was increasing dissent among educators and school administrations as to the overall benefits of AUS courses to the total educational provision.

Supporters of AUS programs could point to several reports that emphasized the overwhelming evidence of the positive affective outcomes of AUS courses described by Tripp (Fensham et al., 1986, p. 92). Similarly, Fraser (1986, p. 82) comments:

> *One of the most remarkable outcomes of the ... projects was their positive impact on student self-esteem. There is little doubt ... that the projects had a remarkably positive effect on the self-esteem of participant students. This is especially noteworthy because the students who had experienced these major benefits in increased self-esteem were "at risk" students, many of whom previously had not found schooling a positive experience.*

The student attitudinal changes reported were almost always positive and teachers generally agreed that the major success of the programs lay in this area. Hall and Watts (1986, p. 65) reported that "the role of the teachers in pursuing the affective goals of the Transition Program was reflected in the highly favourable regard in which the students held them". In Hall and Watts' case study, the teachers saw their role as involving a large pastoral care element with a few teachers being responsible for the largely self-contained program within the school.

Beazley and McGaw Recommendations

With the whole of education under scrutiny by the Beazley and McGaw Committees, weaknesses in provision of AUS courses were examined. Criticism was directed at two areas, namely, the problem of certification and the limited academic opportunities which such courses offered. In juxtaposition, a criticism also was that the benefits of AUS courses in terms of affective outcomes were unavailable to the majority of the students.

At one level, criticism of AUS courses arose because of the low academic level of the subjects offered. Hall and Watts (1986, p. 74) reported that "a feature of the teaching practices was a lack of a sense of urgency". They noted that "without any specific performance goals ... there was very little of the pressure which is common in academic programs". Leaving aside the

rejoinder that this could be misinterpreting the aims of such courses, critics have suggested that students are disadvantaged by not having at least the opportunity to tackle the same subjects as all other students in the upper school. Karmel (1984, p. 196) asserted that "such disadvantaged students will be doubly disadvantaged if they are offered curricula of intellectual pap which will, in fact, segregate them from the majority of students".

A second major criticism of AUS courses derived from their school-based accreditation and certification. Such certificates, as awarded by the individual schools, lacked any portability outside the school's own community and, in most cases, were poorly regarded by potential employers. However, any attempt to upgrade the certification process on a system basis, it was felt, would result in more rigid forms of assessment, greater uniformity across the courses and a general diminution of those affective qualities that were seen as being beneficial within the AUS programs.

The Beazley Committee focused on such criticisms in its discussions and, along with its major recommendations for the reorganization of the upper secondary school, it included reference to the AUS courses. With the separation of the work of Years 11 and 12 into individual units and the broadening of the definition of which subjects were suitable for high school graduation, the need to provide special AUS courses was diminished. The Beazley Report argued that subjects typical of AUS courses should become an integral part of the Year 11 offerings and students taking them would be eligible for the same certification (the Certificate of Secondary Education - CSE) as their more academic counterparts. It was argued that the students would benefit in that the subjects would be "mainstreamed" and any sense of inferiority prevalent among AUS students under the previous arrangements would disappear. The notion of one certification authority issuing one common certificate also was considered to provide a more positive and valuable "end" to the educational experience.

In its report, the McGaw Committee also advocated the importance of extending and diversifying the range of upper secondary subjects as well as of separating the completion of secondary education from the process of selection for higher education. The McGaw Committee also noted the positive affective outcomes of the AUS programs (p. 34):

> *The various one-year courses such as the Alternative Upper School Courses ... are of marginal benefit in that only students who have access to any part of them are those who take part in them exclusively.*
>
> *We would prefer a system in which students have more flexible access to courses likely to be of value to them and in which a wide range of courses could be developed.*

Whatever is of value in the AUS courses, by this argument, they should be available to all students. The very success of the more outstanding AUS courses had called into question the advisability of denying their positive personal, vocational and educational values to the remainder of the student cohort. Most AUS teachers were bopeful that the benefits of AUS courses for their "at risk" students would have value for all students, but they also feared that the benefits for all students could be achieved at the expense of the success of the AUS provision for at risk students.

Consequently, 1984 became a year of decisions for those coordinating AUS courses in Western Australia. Clearly, if the Beazley and McGaw recommendations were to be carried through, then AUS programs had no future as distinct entities in any school. However, schools with highly successful AUS courses understandably might have been reluctant to end them for a promise of better provision through mainstreaming and more acceptable certification. Similarly, a school might have decided that, in the confusion of the reorganization and with the greater local flexibility to develop courses, the time might have been propitious to provide a better deal for those students who needed what AUS had always been seen to offer - a separate program emphasizing affective, personal and vocational ends.

Decisions related to AUS courses made at the end of 1984, implemented through 1985 and re-assessed in 1986 formed the basis of the investigations reported in this paper.

Outline of the Study

The Beazley and McGaw recommendations have had, and will continue to have, an influence on the way in which schools choose to face the very different needs of the returning non-academic, post-compulsory student. Those courses which previously were offered at the Year 11 level, but which readily could become a part of the total course offerings on the timetable grid and receive accreditation through the moderation system offered by the new Secondary Education Authority (SEA), already have disappeared as separate entities. The Vocational and Business Studies (VBS) course is the prime example. The decisions which were faced by the coordinators of AUS and by the schools in which AUS courses were being offered, focussed on four alternatives:

1. Termination of the current AUS course and reliance on the broadening of the subject offerings on the Year 11 timetable grid to satisfy the needs of diverse student groups.

2. Retaining the current AUS course as a separate entity but allowing students in the program to opt for some Certificate of Secondary Education subjects offered as part of the regular Year 11 timetable through partial integration of the streams.

3. Retaining a separate AUS course as before because of its ability to serve the needs of the students.

4. Initiation of AUS course where none had existed previously because of the flexibility offered.

The decision to be made was a difficult one and demanded that consideration be given to fundamental questions of purpose. If the courses were as valuable for some students as claimed (see Fraser, 1986), then those benefits ought to be available to all students in the upper school. Yet, clearly, one of the prime benefits of AUS courses had been shown to be the close relationship between one or a few teachers and the students. In other words, the greatest benefit had been seen in the affective areas and not in the academic. Yet the claims of Karmel and other critics were not to be denied: the students at least should not be prevented by administrative or organizational structures from being able to participate in the wider academic offerings of the school. In practice, it had been also shown that the success of AUS courses often had

been too dependent on one key individual, namely, the coordinator. In the event of transfer of the AUS coordinator, for whatever reason, the course suffered. In the case of those courses begun with Participation and Equity Program seed funding, continued existence was uncertain and demise was a mere stroke of the political pen away. Schools did not have the luxury of the availability of independent funding to use if and when the financial props were removed. To be operating constantly under such difficulties makes nonsense of forward planning.

The issues being confronted by schools with respect to their AUS courses were crucial to the success of the participation goals of the Participation and Equity Program under which the AUS courses were funded. AUS courses had provided for students not attracted by the more academic Year 11 offerings at least an alternative way to extend their secondary education by one year beyond the minimum.

AUS courses attempted to respond to a wide range of needs brought to Year 11 by some students. These needs were not all susceptible to actions taken within the formal curriculum offerings of the schools. Such needs often focused on personal development concerns and were related to the students' views of themselves as they were about to face the world of work. In developing the courses, at least the philosophical notion of equity of outcome was acknowledged by stressing the differences in provision.

It might have been possible for many of the needs satisfied by AUS to continue to be identified and addressed through the course offerings within the framework of the mainstream Year 11 subject and timetable grid in which the student related to a series of different subject teachers. But the feeling among those most concerned with the AUS courses was that these needs would not be accommodated. Consequently, the two broad questions investigated in this study were:

1. Are the normal subject-based timetable arrangements of the Year 11 offerings able to meet the affective and vocational needs of those students previously catered for in separate AUS courses with the same degree of success?

2. Have the gains of certification arising from the Beazley and McGaw recommendations been outweighed by the losses in flexibility?

METHODOLOGY

Case studies of four schools whose AUS histories reflect the four alternative choices indicated previously (i.e., termination of an existing AUS course, retention of an existing course but with the opportunity to study other Year 11 subjects, retention of an existing AUS course and initiation of an AUS course where one didn't exist previously) were carried out. The schools were chosen in consultation with the Secondary Schools Development Unit within the Education Department of Western Australia. The initial investigations were carried out in August/October 1985 and were followed up by contact with the schools throughout 1986 to monitor the outcomes of the decisions which had been made.

The case study methodology used was similar to that of Stake (1976), Kemmis (1977), and Fraser (1980). Interviews with key people and students in each school were carried out by the investigators. The investigators also spent several days in each school observing the workings of the programs and endeavouring to reach an understanding of the rationale for the decision to choose among the four alternatives indicated. Each case study stands alone as a description or portrayal of what had been taking place in that AUS course, its features, the people involved in it and the issues surrounding it.

The Schools

Each school has been given a fictitious name in the case study reports to maintain anonymity.

Casuarina Senior High School, a new and large school, once had a successful separate AUS program and was one of the few in the State to have a Senior Master of AUS. Although the decision to integrate the course into the Year 11 timetable grid had been taken prior to the Beazley/McGaw recommendations being made, the process was accelerated through 1984 and was fully implemented in 1985.

Bel Vista Senior High School opened in the 1950s during a time of rapid expansion in the secondary education system in Western Australia. It previously had a separate AUS program but had begun to integrate it partially into the Year 11 timetable in 1985. In 1986, Bel Vista's AUS students still could be identified, although maintenance of the separation was under review as the number of students was small.

Stratford Senior High School is an old school in a wealthy rural area. It has residential accommodation and, as a consequence, has a majority of students in the upper school. It had a separate AUS course that began in 1980 or possibly earlier. The AUS program was accommodated in an obsolete caretakers' cottage and a program that had some basis in agricultural activities. Its location "down the back" of the school coincided with the philosophy of AUS at the time of its beginnings.

Grevillea Senior High School is the newest of the schools involved in our study. Located among the houses of the middle class suburbs of Perth's mortgage belt, it is a well-equipped and modern school. It had not had an AUS course before 1985 because it was not seen to be needed. Of the four schools in the study, the best provision for a separate AUS program in 1985 was at Grevillea, where it was located at the front of the school. But, already in 1985, Grevillea staff had begun to reconsider where AUS ought to be going and what role it might have in the future offerings of the school.

CASE STUDY 1: CASUARINA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Casuarina is one of the State's largest high schools with an intake into Year 11 well in excess of 300 students. Of these, 80 students were enrolled in the discrete AUS course when it was last offered in 1984. From its establishment in 1977 until 1981, the AUS courses had been coordinated by several different teachers who usually were chosen from those expressing a genuine interest in the needs of the returning, low-achieving students. By

being given a lighter teaching load than normal, the coordinator had time for coordination activities related to the AUS course. In 1982, by special promotion, an appointment was made to position of Senior Master of AUS. The new appointee, Jack, previously had a great deal of experience in pastoral care activities and in working with low achieving students.

The decision of the school to seek such an appointment reflected its philosophy and particularly that of its Principal. It has been observed many times before (see Fraser, 1986) that the role of the school administration in the promotion and support of AUS programs is crucial to their success. Casuarina and its Principal had a well-recognized brief in the provision of educational opportunities for disadvantaged students for whom the system offered little but further failure and lowered self-esteem. The Principal had argued frequently that system change was necessary so that schools more readily could respond to the needs of the young people they served. The system's agreement to the school's expressed need for a senior appointment to AUS was an early precursor of that change. Having a senior appointment gave the AUS some status in the school and enabled Jack to have access to important decision-making processes.

Pre-1985 at Casuarina

In this period, Casuarina had access to small amounts of funding from the Development Unit within the Education Department. The school had tried to develop small business enterprises of the kind reported by Kennedy and Patterson (1986). These had focused on catering and screen printing, but neither had been successful. A demountable classroom was established as an AUS room and comfortable furniture was provided for it.

In 1984, the AUS course attracted 80 students, of whom 35 were non-Casuarina ex-Year 10. Few opportunities were being provided for such students by the other schools in that area. While the course was described as being discrete, it was partly on the timetable even at that time. Three AUS subjects were part of the timetable: General English, General Mathematics and General Studies (a course in life skills). These subjects were school-based courses. Students took each of these subjects and then chose three other subjects from the timetable such as Motors and Machines, Home Economics, Farming, Typing and sometimes even Tertiary Admission Examination subjects like Mathematics 4 or Human Biology. AUS students thus were involved partly with an AUS course and partly with the normal offering of Year 11 subjects. But the timetable was organized in such a way as to give the AUS students as a group a common block of available time which could then be utilized for excursions or visits to work places. Jack was able to maintain close contact with the students as he took them all for General Studies and was assisted by two other teachers in the English and Mathematics classes.

Work Experience was a major part of the General Studies program and students were able to be placed in a variety of positions for periods of two and three weeks without detriment to their non-AUS subjects. The value of Work Experience often was seen by the students in terms of the number of jobs or apprenticeships which arose as a result.

Pastoral care, which was held to be one of the strong outcomes of an AUS course, was the responsibility of Jack, though he was supported by the two other teachers who assisted in the program as well as by the Year Person and

the school Guidance Officer. In Jack's view, pastoral care, no matter how effective, was at best "band-aiding" by the time students reached Year 11. The real problems arose from an inappropriate curriculum in Years 8-10 and inadequate assistance given to students recognized as at-risk even at that early stage.

1985 Changes at Casuarina

With the recommendaions of the Beazley and McGaw Committees generally approved, Casuarina made several basic decisions for changes in its provision of AUS activities for 1985 and beyond.

1. Integration. In keeping with the philosophy of the school and reflecting the notions of greater equity in the provision of educational opportunity, the decision to integrate the AUS course fully in the Year 11 timetable grid was made. Equity, it was argued by the Principal and Jack, could only be achieved by not treating the students differently from the rest of the student body. All students would have the benefits of access to the broadened curricular offerings and, with the new provisions for high school graduation, all students at least would have the opportunity to graduate. Jack had developed a new course entitled Social Education to replace the old General Studies and this appeared on the grid. With a plethora of school-based subjects approved by the Secondary Education Authority (SEA), the students were able to make a choice from 47 subjects on the timetable. Not all subjects were suitable for those students previously in the AUS, but it was considered important to enable students to choose and to create a program of studies that would serve their individual needs.

2. Selection of Students. Sixty-three students were enrolled in Social Education in 1985 and no students from other schools were permitted into the course. The Guidance Officer and Jack checked through the student applications for Year 11 subjects and, where necessary, interviewed students and parents about subjects and levels for entry to apprenticeships or suitability of the choice in relation to student aspirations and ability. Enrolment in Social Education remained the one way of identifying AUS-type students though enrolment was open to others.

3. Pastoral Care. The introduction of a new whole-school approach to discipline, the retention of the same group of teachers in Social Education and a respected and caring "Year Person" (i.e., someone responsible for the overall pastoral care of all children at one grade level) lessened the need for the type of intensive pastoral care that had been such an element in the past. Pastoral care was seen as something needed by the whole school, not just by one small part of it. Major provision was made for an effective system of year teachers to whom students would relate throughout their high school period. Similarly, the need for a separate AUS room was obviated by the provision of year rooms fitted out with comfortable furniture and providing a sense of home space in the school. Freed from the extra demands of pastoral care, Jack was able to take on more regular teaching activities in Year 11 Mathematics and to be more involved in staff development in school-based curricula.

4. Reporting. One of the great disadvantages of the discrete AUS system had been the school-based report. This had little value away from the local school district except for providing a potential employer with a record of

school attendance, work experience and personal development. While valuable in some respects, particularly for reporting broadly on the students' school life, it lacked both portability and community credibility. The Beazley recommendations included provision for a system-wide certificate for all exiting students who completed at least one term of Year 11. The Certificate of Secondary Education provides a statement of student achievement from Year 9 to the point of exit from school. Casuarina decided that, in the light of its decision not to treat the AUS students differently, students who had taken Social Education and therefore had been involved in Work Experience would receive only the School Leaver Certificate from the SEA. Jack did not agree with this decision, though he supported the idea of and the necessity for a system-wide certificate. He regarded it as a loss that the students would not get the kind of broad report package that provided more information about students than just their academic achievement.

5. Work Experience. Social Education was the vehicle by which the students received Work Experience, although timetabling issues added extra dimensions to its organization. When students went to a Work Experience of three weeks, they were forced to miss those other classes which they had chosen. Negotiation with the teachers of the classes which were missed was Jack's task. As a result, the integration and the demands of Work Experience impacted on the selection of students. Students who chose Social Education,but were deemed "too good academically", were counselled by the Guidance Officer against missing too many classes in their other subjects while they were out on Work Experience. Thus, while integration was supposed to have offered the opportunity for more students to have the advantage of those elements of the AUS course that were its strengths, it worked against many students (other than those low-achievers whose success was perceived differently) being able to participate.

6. Certification. When the body which accredits Year 11 courses (the Secondary Education Authority) was established, it divided the subject offerings in the upper school into three types: those that led to the Tertiary Admissions Examinations; those that were school-based in design and student assessment, but were moderated and accredited by the Secondary Education Authority; and those that were school-based and registered with the Secondary Education Authority, but were not subject to moderation. Only subjects in the first two categories could be counted towards High School Graduation. Throughout 1985, teachers involved in Social Education (Jack's course which had received widespread acclaim and had been adopted by several other schools) fought a running battle with the Secondary Education Authority over its decision not to accept the course for accreditation. The argument centred on the subjectiveness of the material and the inability of any moderator to determine what value to place on personal growth or attitudinal change in students. Moderation required measurement and what could be measured in Social Education was peripheral to its main purpose. Besides, measuring was antithetical to the growth philosophy of the course. However, it became obvious that, without some form of measurement, Social Education was never going to receive accreditation. Consequently, in the resulting confusion, students opted not to enrol for the course for 1986 because it could not be used for High School Graduation. The course eventually was accredited early in 1986 but this was too late for the students to change courses.

Evaluating the Changes at Casuarina

Total integration of the AUS program into the Year 11 timetable proved to be something of a mixed blessing for Casuarina. Certainly integration had provided all students with the real chance to achieve High School Graduation and opened up a broad range of subjects to everyone. But some students who wanted to take Social Education and have Work Experience were denied the opportunity by the selection procedures. The students who formerly would have been in the AUS program were then fully integrated within the upper school.

Jack was somewhat disillusioned by the changes. He was no longer Senior Master of AUS but had become Senior Master of School-Based Courses with responsibility for staff development in the design and implementation of courses for both accreditation and registration by the Secondary Education Authority. He continued to teach Social Education and attempted to change the definition of Work Experience to include part-time and weekend work. This enabled Social Education to be taken by more students who, because of the demands of their other subjects, were precluded from the block Work Experience.

But integration brought with it another more serious problem. The pastoral care that had been provided so well even in 1985 had deteriorated in 1986. The "Year Person" system has not been as effective. A "Year House" (i.e., a house to which students can go to seek advice and help from their Year Persons) was built at the school and, although it was very pleasant and provided superior office space and interview rooms for the staff, it served to isolate counselling at the front of the school. And, because counselling was so visible, staff who previously might have been inclined to talk with students could then send them to the Year House. Jack has his own theory on why the system had not worked as well.

> *When the same year person who has had the kids in Years 8 to 10 and who has had to deal primarily with the academically poorer, more troublesome kids, suddenly in Year 11 has a chance to work with the brighter ones, then the "dumber" ones get less attention.*

In an attempt to overcome this problem, Casuarina plans in the future to timetable Social Education and General English back-to-back and have one teacher taking both subjects.

Towards the end of 1986, another problem arose with the Secondary Education Authority and its view of certification. One of the strengths of the recommended changes was the acceptance of the need for one certifying authority issuing one identifiable common certificate. The Secondary Education Authority recommended that it would issue only those certificates relating to the completion of Year 12 and that the schools should issue their own school-exiting certificates to Year 11 students. However, early in 1987, this problem was resolved so that Secondary Education Authority certificates are being issued to all students who complete Year 11 but who do not return for Year 12.

The Principal of Casuarina and Jack originally commented that the AUS course was only band-aiding a problem that had arisen because of the poor curriculum in Years 8 to 10. The implementation of the Beazley recommendations for the lower school through 1987-88 might see the beginnings of changes that will complement those that already have been initiated in the upper school.

CASE STUDY 2: BEL VISTA SENIOR HIGH

Bel Vista is located in one of the hills districts of Perth in an area traditionally given to orchards and market gardens, but more recently seen as an attractive one for professional families whose breadwinners commute to the city. The school has grown rapidly over the 28 years since it was established as "a small regional high school". It has a high retention rate into Year 11 (over 70%) and, therefore, was not eligible for Participation and Equity Program funding. The AUS course was begun in the late 1970s by several staff members who were interested in addressing the needs of those students who were coming back to Year 11 but who did not want to go on to Year 12. The AUS course was discrete, with the students only joining the rest of Year 11 students for sport and a guest speaker program. The coordinator, Dave, had come into teaching late after a career in the mining industry. He brought with him a caring concern for the students as well as an understanding of the needs of the world of work. The staff at Bel Vista accepted the introduction of the AUS course and supported the allocation of teacher time to its coordination.

An unusual feature of the AUS course at Bel Vista was the calibre of the students it attracted. Almost all of the students who study at the Basic Level in lower school leave at the end of Year 10. (The school has attempted to deal with this situation by the introduction of Year 10 classes in both English and Social Studies which are designed specifically for students intending to leave at the end of the year. This allows some attention to be paid to skills pertaining to the transition from school to work.) Most of those involved in the AUS course had obtained several Intermediate passes and, more rarely, an Advanced pass. Hall and Watts (1986) noted that AUS courses seem not to be able to fulfill the role of educational "lifeboat" for the lowest group in the school population.

In spite of the generally higher Year 10 levels which AUS students at Bel Vista had achieved (in comparison with those in many other AUS groups), the course provided for very real needs which could not be met in the traditional Year 11 program. The students occasionally were labelled as troublesome and generally were not motivated highly to study. However, the students (and their parents) often felt that there was a need for another year at school to enable students to mature and prepare for the world of work. The student cohesion and variety offered by the AUS course allowed students the chance to "grow up" without the pressures of a heavy academic load, while the Work Experience sessions provided them with different employment possibilities.

In the Bel Vista AUS course, the concept of "different but not inferior" had been emphasized by the staff. One student, after successfully completing the program and then spending several years in the workforce, attended Canning Senior College and later was accepted by the Western Australian College of Advanced Education for study to become a teacher. The success of the AUS course is particularly interesting in view of the fact that, prior to 1985, there were very few students attracted to the non-tertiary-bound Certificate of Secondary Education subjects being offered. It seems that the students opted for either tertiary entrance subjects or AUS, but they were not interested in studying the less academic subjects if they did not lead on to tertiary admission and offered none of the advantages of the AUS course.

Pre-1985 at Bel Vista

Prior to 1985, those involved in the AUS were perceived within the school to be a discrete group "different" from the other Year 11 students. Dave was seen as having primary responsibility for the students and other teachers clearly regarded these students as his concern.

As coordinator, Dave was responsible for several of the core subjects that were studied, although English was done with Sandra, a teacher who had a great deal of previous experience with an AUS program at another school. There was some choice of subjects, but even the optional ones were studied only with students of the AUS group and hence were a separate entity within the school. Photography, woodwork, business studies, drama and media were among the subjects that were offered, with catering being a particularly popular option. In 1983, the school received a grant from the Transition Education Program to enable catering facilities to be developed. Because the AUS timetable largely was independent from that of the rest of the school, it was relatively easy for the students to spend extra time in this area when the occasion warranted. As a result, a flourishing catering business was established. In many AUS courses, catering has been the star performer (see Hall & Watts, 1986, p. 77-78).

In both 1983 and 1984, liaison with the parents of the AUS students was a priority for both Dave and the Principal. Parents were invited to a meeting where the course objectives were explained and the flexibility of the program emphasized. Parents were encouraged to offer suggestions regarding the directions and emphases that they would like to see developed within the course during the year. The school tried to convey the impression that the AUS provided an alternative challenge. But this meeting did not take place in 1985 because there was no longer a separate course.

The six weeks of Work Experience in which all AUS students were involved was a particularly valuable part of the course prior to 1985. Dave organized it in two three-week blocks, utilizing the resources of local businesses, light industries and commercial houses. For some students, Work Experience resulted in a job - the ultimate goal of AUS courses by many measures. However, it was worthwhile because of the growth in students' self-esteem and confidence. The six weeks of absence from school was considered time well spent and, because the group was self-contained, there were no interruptions to the mainstream students.

Prior to 1985, the course included camps, community activities and the pursuit of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (which includes such things as individual hobbies, physical exercises, camping and community service). One community project included liaising with the local Shire to plan and build a 17-kilometre walking trail through the hills. Such activities enhanced the cohesiveness of the group and allowed Dave to offer a great deal of informal counselling and pastoral care. Real friendships were developed. This, combined with the close links between the parents and the school, led to a secure and happy social environment.

However, in spite of the many obvious advantages which the course had to offer, there was one very important problem. It lacked status among the general student body and was widely perceived as being "slack". Although the mobility and freedom of the members of the AUS group were noted, and no doubt envied, there seems to have been a widespread belief among other students that there was little or no prestige attached to belonging to this group.

1985 Changes at Bel Vista

Following the publication of the Beazley and McGaw Reports in 1984, the Principal and staff felt that they had little option but to integrate the AUS course into the wider range of Year 11 subjects. They considered that it was better to make the decision early and to plan for the way that the new grid might operate rather than to wait for the end of the year when they thought that they would be told to have it ready for 1985. In fact, because the Education Department had put no pressure on the schools to change the AUS programs in any way at all, the decision at Bel Vista was based initially on an inaccurate perception of the attitude of the Department. The Principal was not in favour of integration but felt that there was little choice because the Education Department officially had adopted both reports.

However, Sandra, the teacher who had taken the AUS group for English, was in favour of the new scheme. She had come from a school in a much lower socioeconomic area, where the AUS students generally were less academically able. She felt that the Bel Vista students would benefit in both an academic and a social sense if they were free to pursue a wider range of subjects.

Dave himself was in favour of the AUS course being integrated into the Year 11 timetable. He saw the generalist nature of the curriculum (as recommended by the McGaw Report) as being a tremendous step forward because it allowed all students a year to mature and "grow up" before the pressures of the Tertiary Entrance Examinations in Year 12. However, he realized that integration would result in a deterioration of the close and secure relationship which he had been able to build up with previous groups. Also, both Dave and Sandra agreed that it would be all too easy in a school such as Bel Vista to overlook the less articulate and less academically gifted students. In addition, Dave was aware of the grave threat to those all-important parts of the AUS program that would not work on the grid: the catering business, Work Experience, community service projects and the camping and adventure outings associated with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. All of these fears proved to have been well-founded.

It is fair to say, too, that Dave had very good personal reasons for being wary of the move towards integration. After working for some time as a geologist, he began teaching in a large school before joining the Science staff at Bel Vista. He had been disappointed with teaching in that it offered him only a limited contact with a great many students. The whole educational process, he felt, had become too fragmented and dominated by the needs of the curriculum. He suspected that the needs of individual students would be met better in the high schools if each class had only a small number of teachers and remained together as a stable group (as is the case in primary schools). He saw his own role as a clarifier of information to large classes as being far from ideal both for himself and the students. Hence, the opportunity to teach in the AUS program gave him a situation very close to the one he desired in that it involved working with a relatively small group of students whom he knew extremely well and with whom he interacted more as a mentor than simply as an information-giver.

This favourable situation obviously would be threatened with the partial integration of the AUS course. Dave realized that his role as coordinator would become far less important and that he might be forced back gradually into being just another teacher of larger lower school science classes, a situation which he hoped that he had left behind.

Partial Integration at Bel Vista

The decision to integrate the AUS program partially, rather than totally, into the Year 11 timetable meant that the coordinator retained some of the time allotted to him and provided the school with a justification for being able to draw on Participation and Equity Program funding. Bel Vista in 1985 seemed to have arrived at the position that Casuarina was at in 1984.

In 1985, the problem of identifying which of the Year 11 students were members of the partially integrated AUS program was no easy one to solve. Whereas Social Education had been a course available only to AUS students up until the end of 1984, it was made available in 1985 to any student in the upper school. The class then was comprised of Year 11 level students who saw themselves as AUS students, Year 11 students who intended to go on to Year 12 (and did not see themselves as being part of the AUS group) and Year 12 students. (The Year 11 Social Education class at Bel Vista has enrolled at least one Year 12 student in each year since its inclusion on the general timetable. This is an interesting example of the current flexibility available to students when choosing courses.)

Similarly, as General English, Catering and Applying Mathematics 110 also were available to all, in 1985 there was a mixture of AUS and non-AUS students in each group. Those students who did see themselves as Dave's particular responsibility often experienced success in these subjects, but many students had problems when they attempted the more difficult Certificate of Secondary Education or Tertiary Admissions Examination subjects. Hence, a threat of failure was then a very real part of their lives, whereas there had been few worries in this regard in the discrete AUS course of previous years.

Dave himself defined AUS students as those who fulfilled the criteria of studying both General English and Social Education and intending to leave Bel Vista at the end of Year 11. Because all subjects were available to all students, the intention not to return to school in Year 12 became perhaps the most important element. However, at the end of 1985, a number of students who had considered themselves to be members of the AUS program throughout the year decided to return to the school and study at the Year 12 level in 1986. This had been anticipated neither by Dave nor the administration of the school because, prior to the integration of the AUS course, no AUS student ever had returned to the school in the following year. In fact, the AUS students would not have had sufficient subjects to be able to do so prior to 1985.

While the return to Bel Vista to study at the Year 12 level was seen as an extremely positive result of the integrated AUS program, it did mean that the third criterion for identification of AUS students was no longer of any great value. Although the status of "partial" as opposed to "total" integration meant that the school received additional benefits in staff and time allocations, it would be very difficult to point to very many other differences. By the end of 1985, integration was well on the way to becoming assimilation at Bel Vista.

In spite of the difficulties of identifying AUS students, Bel Vista claimed that in 1985 it had enrolled 32 students in its partially integrated AUS program. By August only 16 remained. Over half of those who had left the school had done so in order to take up full employment.

During 1985, the Social Education class remained the core of the AUS program, even though there were students in it who quite obviously were not members of the AUS group. The students saw this class as a "home" within the school. When interviewed, students all agreed that it was good to have such a subject which was not as rigidly confined to a specific core of knowledge and assessment as most of the others which they studied. It was very noticeable that students were open and friendly towards each other. There did not appear to be any "pecking order" and all were respected as equals. Dave saw the Social Education course as a way of continuing "the application of the philosophy and method and part of the content of the traditional AUS course". Certainly, the attitudes and demeanour of his students suggested that he had been successful in achieving this end.

However, Dave felt that, as a result of integration, there had been some deterioration in the quality of the pastoral care which each AUS student received. While being quick to acknowledge that part of his role in this regard had been taken over by a very good Yearmaster, an enthusiastic Youth Education Officer and, to perhaps a lesser extent, the individual subject teachers who had AUS students in their classes, he felt that the dissolution of the discrete group had been a serious loss.

All those who had had any involvement with the AUS group agreed, too, that there were a number of students in any one year (possibly about six) who would have returned to Bel Vista to participate in a separate AUS course, but who do not feel competent to manage the integrated program. These students presumably would have gained a great deal from an additional unstressed year at school, but this had been denied them. Not every student could cope with enough subjects in the "smorgasbord" to make return to school in Year 11 a viable option. The loss of the security of the small cohesive group exacerbated this problem. These students then left school at the end of Year 10.

Nevertheless, while there was obviously a cost to be paid for integration, there were also benefits to be gained. Firstly, the benefits of the Social Education course, which were previously accessible only to AUS students, were made available to anyone in Upper School. The fact that both Year 11 and Year 12 students, who never had considered themselves to be doing an "AUS-type course" had enrolled in each year that it had been offered, demonstrates that this existed a need which was not being met previously. Secondly, any upper school student at Bel Vista then had a subject choice ranging over the whole timetable offering. Whereas previously those in the AUS program had a relatively limited range of subjects from which to choose, all Year 11 students were then free to choose any subject at all, although some guidance was given.

As a result of integration, Social Education had become just another subject on the timetable: it was available to all and it apparently had none of the negative associations sometimes attached previously to the AUS course. Each student had very little knowledge of the subjects which were being studied by classmates. Also teachers of other subjects had no idea whether students in their classes would be classified as AUS students or not. While this situation completely did away with the labelling of some students as "slack", it was not without its problems. The complications inherent in the decision to integrate were shown clearly in a 1985 Social Education class in which the details of a one-week Work Experience session were being discussed. One student was going to Rottnest Island for part of the time to attend a camp

which had been organized for his Year 12 Biology class. Another student was having a major test in Year 11 Accountancy, which would necessitate his absence from work for at least half a day because he felt that failure to do the test would result in a disastrous drop in his grades. Almost all of the students, while looking forward to the stimulation and challenge of being in the workplace, were concerned that they would be missing classes in other subjects and be disadvantaged because of this.

The Course in 1986 at Bel Vista

Although there was only one Social Education class in the school in 1986, it was very large. At the beginning of the year, it comprised 30 students of whom 25 were studying at the Year 11 level and five were in Year 12. Sixteen of those in Year 11 and four of those in Year 12 completed the year.

Because there was only one class, Dave lost his time allocation as course coordinator. This resulted in his going back to a more orthodox teaching situation; this was an outcome which he had foreseen (but nonetheless hoped to avoid) when plans to integrate were first mooted in 1984. In addition to the subjects which he had taught previously to the AUS group (Social Education and Applying Mathematics 110), he found himself teaching two classes of Year 10 Computing and one class of Year 9 Science. With this full load of teaching, he was unable to give the Year 11 students the amount of time which he had given to previous groups.

This change in Dave's role had accelerated a process which was apparent (and perhaps inevitable) as soon as the AUS course was integrated into the Year 11 timetable. The whole concept of an "alternative course" is fading from people's memories. If an AUS program is considered at all, Social Education is probably seen as providing its function. To some extent, Dave himself has accepted this state of affairs.

Whereas the AUS class had at least one outing per fortnight prior to 1985, any movement of the Social Education class away from the school was monitored carefully from 1985 onwards. In 1986, only five days in all were spent in activities related to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and there were only two overnight camps in the forest. A few hours also were stolen to visit the Career Reference Centre (which is a centre, located in Perth and funded by the state government, for the purpose of providing information about careers).

The Work Experience sessions also have suffered as a result of integration. Prior to 1985, the students were in the workplace for three periods of two weeks each (a total of six weeks) in the year. However, in 1985, only three weeks of Work Experience were available. When this situation was given careful attention in 1986 and Jenny, the Youth Education Officer, Dave managed to provide four weeks of Work Experience in two blocks of two weeks. However, the dominance of the timetable created enormous problems. The first session was available in second term. Many students chose to be absent from school for only one of the two weeks, because they felt that they could not spare any more time away from their studies. The final two weeks were available in December after the final examinations. While this time was free from the demands of other subjects, it did have the disadvantage of offering no opportunity for feedback from the group or any post-Work Experience counselling from Dave and Jenny.

The Course in 1987 at Bel Vista

Dave is not teaching at Bel Vista Senior High in 1987 because he has arranged to have a year's leave of absence. The one Social Education class is being taught by Tom, whom the Principal considers to be the most appropriate teacher on the staff to take over Dave's role - an opinion with which Dave wholeheartedly concurs. Tom is being assisted by Jenny, who has been vitally interested and involved with the Social Education group throughout 1986 and who organized Work Experience sessions and outings for them.

Conclusion: Bel Vista

It would seem that the decision to integrate at Bel Vista Senior High has had a number of positive features. Firstly, the stigma attached to belonging to the AUS group disappeared; all upper school students were treated equally by their peers, regardless of which subjects they were studying. Secondly, all Upper School students had a wide range of subjects from which to choose (although students who previously might have been doing the separate AUS course often experienced only limited success in the more difficult subjects). Thirdly, Social Education was made available to all students in the upper school and, while the teacher was self-chosen for the task and the students were free to choose whether to enrol in it or not, it no doubt remained a very valuable subject.

There were also a number of negative features. The benefits of cohesion and security which were so much a part of the discrete AUS group were exchanged for a wider curricular offering and a sense of belonging to the wider group. The sense of "difference" was lost, but then the sense of fellowship within the smaller group had gone too. More tangible sacrifices were made in the areas of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, camps, outings and Work Experience. While great efforts to overcome these problems were made by all concerned, the students were not as advantaged in these areas as the AUS groups previously were. However, perhaps the greatest loss of all was suffered by the small group of students who chose not to return to school in Year 11 because the niche which was available to them previously had disappeared. For these adolescents, the move towards integration had totally negative results.

CASE STUDY 3: STRATFORD SENIOR HIGH

Stratford is one of the State's older high schools and serves the needs of a large and prosperous rural district. Boarding facilities are associated with the school to provide for the needs of students from outlying areas. Because it is one of the few high schools in Western Australia to offer these facilities, the school is attended by some students whose homes are far from the township of Stratford (and from as far afield as Christmas Island in several instances). Many of the boarders came to Stratford to enter the upper school in order to study for entrance to higher education, after having completed their lower school studies at smaller District High Schools (i.e., schools covering Years 1-10) closer to their homes. In 1985, the school enrolled nearly 800 students, of whom 230 were in Year 11. The AUS course had 34 students at the beginning of 1985.

Stratford received special funding from the Participation and Equity Program and used the funds for both the AUS course and for special projects within the school as a whole. The old caretaker's cottage at the periphery of the school has been freshly painted and maintained and made available to those involved in the AUS course. The question as to whether or not it is better for AUS students to have their own social space has been argued before by Hall and Watts (1986, p. 74), but certainly the decision to provide this cottage at Stratford has had some rather unfortunate results which no doubt were not anticipated by those who made the original decision.

The actual position of the building - as far from the administration and front of the school as it is possible to be - suggests that the AUS course has a low level of prestige within the school. Unfortunately, this situation was exacerbated by the fact that the house's design is not suited to the purpose for which it was used and no major alterations were undertaken. The small, rather cosy loungeroom, complete with fireplace and mantlepiece, has been crammed (rather incongruously) with 14 regulation desks and chairs. However, because all classes of common subjects consist of more than 14 students, it was necessary for alternative classrooms to be found in the main school buildings. Because the school's administrators presumably saw this as a short-term problem (to be solved when some students leave the course and the numbers drop to 14) or perhaps because the AUS program had a relatively low priority within the school generally, AUS classes often found themselves in the least desirable classrooms in the school (e.g., disused science laboratories or rooms with inappropriate equipment and no heating or cooling facilities). Obviously, this situation had a negative effect on student morale.

Because the house is so small, there was no possibility of creating a place where the students could meet and relax in their own space. So, unfortunately there was no social benefit derived from the use of the house. In effect, it provided an office for staff associated with the program, storage space for staff and students and one rather unusual and relatively useless classroom.

The staff of Stratford Senior High School is proud of those students who are academically able and are capable of doing well in external examinations. There is, perhaps, less sympathy for those who are not so endowed. The AUS program at the school originated in about 1980, was revitalized in 1983 and was taken over in 1985 by Betty, who returned to teaching on part-time basis and found herself the full-time coordinator of the AUS program. She had been trained originally as a primary school teacher and felt that she had encountered a good deal of prejudice from the staff as a result of this. Perhaps, to some extent, this is a reflection of her own misfounded feelings of inadequacy. In any event, she often felt that she was asserting the rights of her students (since they were often at the bottom of the "pecking order") and in so doing asserting her own rights as well. Happily, it would seem that she met with some success.

Trevor, a teacher involved in the program for part of his workload, came into schools after working as an agricultural journalist. He introduced Agriculture into the AUS program and generally provided valuable back-up for Betty.

Pre-1985 at Stratford

"Out-the-back" and discrete would best characterize the AUS program at Stratford before 1985. AUS students were not integrated with the rest of the school at all, even for sport. The course seems to have been regarded generally as one for under-achievers. Those who had done reasonably well in Year 10 were actively dissuaded from joining the group, whereas those who had not managed to succeed were given little choice. The Senior Master of Physical Education, by refusing to allow the AUS students to join the other Year 11 students for Sport, was simply giving a somewhat exaggerated reflection of the general perception of staff towards the students in the AUS program.

Students were offered a three-part course:

Part 1: School-Based Subjects Undertaken by All Students

English	-	emphasizing communications skills
Mathematics	-	practical and everyday mathematics
Independent Living	-	cookery, budgeting and home management
Vocational and Personal Awareness	-	interpersonal skills, job skills, study skills
Outdoor Education	-	recreational and leisure skills

Part 2: Work Experience

Placement with local employers for a block of two weeks each term plus a single day each week

Part 3: Vocational Electives

Students could choose from Industrial Arts, Photography, Art/Craft, Catering, Business Studies and Agriculture.

The planning of the program in 1983 had emphasized a holistic approach to the education of the AUS group and providing students with personal skills that both could be immediately useful and could provide a basis for longer-term needs beyond school. However, as a small program with limited resources and relying on the goodwill of other teachers and departments in the school, the AUS program seemed destined to remain marginal to the perceived <u>real</u> functions of Stratford.

Some Participation and Equity Program funding was received in 1984 for a review of the AUS course. A substantial amount of interviewing of students, teachers, parents and employers was done and a report was presented to the school. This report recommended partial integration of the AUS with the mainstream Year 11 program so that students at least would have the opportunity to take some of the regular subjects should they need to. It also strongly argued for the inclusion of AUS students in the regular Year 11 sports program. The release of the Beazley and McGaw Reports supported those recommendations.

In spite of the recommendations of the three reports (Beazley, McGaw and Stratford), the decision was made to keep the AUS course quite separate from the rest of the school because it was felt that this would best serve the interests of underachieving students. The Principal explained:

A good AUS course serves a need for the kid who couldn't generally cope ... caters for the needs of the kid who hasn't a job, hasn't got the academic ability to go further ... A course has to be available for them.

For the Principal, the need to maintain flexibility of timetabling to facilitate the Work Experience program was justification enough to retain AUS as a discrete entity. The hidden agenda of greater ease of funding, however, was a real stimulus to the decision.

The Principal played an active role in promoting the program through his connections in the district's service clubs and as the senior education officer among the contributory schools. The school could be seen to be doing its part in assisting students in the transition from school to work.

1985 Changes at Stratford

Several changes occurred in the program in 1985. The course in Social Education developed by Jack at Casuarina was implemented at Stratford following an inservice course for AUS teachers. Because the relative isolation of Stratford made the task of the AUS team more difficult, this meeting with other teachers doing the same work was seen as being very helpful. Catering was propped up by the availability of some part-time assistance from Home Economics and the students catered for school functions such as the opening of the new gymnasium and the school ball. A course in Agriculture, with simple vegetable-growing and the construction of a greenhouse, was offered. However, after a year, the greenhouse was still only a frame covering a desultory patch of weeds; the all-important plumber had never materialized! The difficulty in acquiring specialist services is just one of the problems associated with setting up new courses in country areas. Another problem particular to Agriculture in a rural area is simply that it can't be realistic enough without being too difficult or too expensive. What child raised on a farm would be excited about driving a derelict tractor around a few hectares?

For the final term of 1985, A Link Course was initiated with a technical college on the outskirts of Perth, some 90 kilometres from Stratford. Betty and the students caught a train at 7.20 am on Friday mornings in order to spend a full day at the technical college, returning to Stratford at 5.55 pm. The course was set up in such a way that all students were able to "taste" a number of different courses available through the technical college. Because students in country towns often do not fully understand what courses are available at the larger technical colleges, this was considered to be a particularly valuable experience.

Pre-apprenticeship-type courses in such areas as woodwork, welding and hairdressing were offered. Also the students were transported by bus to another technical college for classes in horticulture and catering. Although there were initially some grumbles about the need for <u>all</u> students to attend <u>all</u> classes (particularly from the boys when faced with the prospect of classes in ladies' hairdressing!), the problems were overcome and students who chose to enrol in the Link Course were very enthusiastic about it.

Enterprise Activities at Stratford

Trevor organized for the old wash-house adjacent to the AUS house to be set up with heating, watering and feeding systems for raising chickens. Two dozen chickens at a time could be raised to maturity and sold as either laying hens or dressed chickens. The students who were boarders tended to take greatest interest in the enterprise because they were rostered to look after the chickens during the weekends. The monetary return was small but the activity itself was valuable.

Problems at Stratford

The retention of the "down-the-back" status of the AUS program reinforced the students' separateness from the rest of the school. It also did little to overcome the epithets slung at the "vegies", a problem made worse by the attempts at growing vegetables and the never-ending saga of the forlorn greenhouse.

More serious for the school, perhaps, was the failure of the AUS to attract Aboriginal students. An Aboriginal girl had begun the course but had not lasted. The Aboriginal teaching aide at the school suggested that the course was too far removed from reality to provide effective motivation for Aboriginal students. It was felt that there should be more emphasis on motors and machines and other utilitarian skills and less on the self-development and affective education which the Aboriginals found threatening. Work Experience for Aboriginal students also could be a difficult time in a town where to be black was a distinct disadvantage.

In 1985, 11 students completed the AUS course. Of these, five came back to Stratford Senior High in 1986 and studied subjects in the "general" upper school program. One boy, who is completing his schooling by doing Year 12 in 1987, has been made a school prefect. This is a real achievement for him and the AUS course. Of the other six, two have gained apprenticeships and one was admitted to a pre-apprenticeship course in catering in one of the larger suburban technical colleges. Overall, 1985 is considered to have been an extremely successful year for the AUS program.

As in the other schools, Stratford decided to issue a report, comprising a statement of performance across the three areas of the program, to students leaving school. Employers reported that they were ambivalent about its value and suggested instead that, in a town like Stratford, jobs were obtained by being known through one's family. The school reports were good for the self-esteem of the students but of little real value in the world of work.

1986 Activities at Stratford

In 1986, a number of changes occurred in the course. Firstly, AUS students participated in sport with the rest of the upper school group. Although some students showed no particular desire to participate, others enthusiastically welcomed this opportunity to interact socially with the other Year 11 students. Secondly, five Aboriginal students joined the group and stayed in the program throughout the year. Betty and Trevor were particularly pleased with both of these developments.

However, there were some serious problems within the AUS program in 1986. Probably the most serious of these was that the timetable never permitted the two separate AUS classes to be together as a group at any time . This led to severe fragmentation because it was very difficult to foster a strong sense of identity and group cohesion; in effect, there were two separate AUS groups in the school. The students were aware of the problem and often voiced their desire to be together as one group but, unfortunately, the demands of the timetable (and the size of the AUS cottage) made this impossible.

This situation was further exacerbated by a lack of student leadership and motivation within the AUS course. At the beginning of the 1986 school year, 45 students were enrolled in the AUS program because the administration of the school encouraged students to do this "just in case" they came back to school. In actual fact, 24 students started the year, while 13 completed the course. Of those who left during the year, three gained apprenticeships at businesses which they had attended on Work Experience and three others gained part-time work.

Because the two AUS groups were timetabled quite separately from the rest of the school, some of the classes in the optional areas became very small as numbers in the courses dropped. For example, there were two students remaining in the AUS Early Childhood Studies class by the end of the year, while there were seven in the AUS Agriculture group and six in the AUS Catering class.

1987 Activities at Stratford

The AUS course was integrated into the upper school timetable in 1987. The former Principal was largely responsible for this decision. Certainly it made the creation of the Year 11 timetable much more convenient. Betty did not fight against this decision, but had serious reservations about it. Work Experience remains part of Social Education but obviously there are very real conflicts between the needs of the other subjects in which the students are enrolled and the time allocation for Work Experience. Betty is also well aware that some of the weaker students, who had their own niche and sense of personal identity as members of the AUS group in previous years, might feel "lost" in the general Year 11 group.

CONCLUSION: STRATFORD SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The AUS course at Stratford was always seen as being somewhat marginal to the perceived "real" aims of the admnistration and the majority of the staff at the school. It was regarded as a program for non-achievers and its discrete status within the school (even to the point of prohibiting AUS students from joining the rest of their cohort for sporting activities) ensured that those in the alternative program were seen as quite separate from the mainstream students. Because the core subjects studied bore little resemblance to those done by the rest of the Year 11 group, it was necessary for any student who wished to stay on at school to repeat Year 11 in the more academic, traditional stream before going on to Year 12. The fact that a number of students have chosen to do just that speaks volumes for their tenacity and Betty's success in building self-esteem. It certainly would seem that the need for AUS students to repeat Year 11 at Stratford is a

disadvantage of the discrete group (in contrast to the integrated programs at Casuarina and Bel Vista which allowed students to go on to Year 12 with very few problems). However, there is the question of whether these students could have coped with a traditional Year 11 course without the additional year of "growing up" and the opportunity to develop the higher self-esteem which was provided in the AUS program.

The decision to integrate the AUS course into the timetable in 1987 was to some extent forced upon the school by the low numbers in many of the AUS optional areas and the consequent underutilization of teaching resources. However, there might have been other ways to overcome this problem.

CASE STUDY 4: GREVILLEA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Grevillea is a modern, well-equipped school on the northern edge of the Perth metropolitan area. It is surrounded by substantial new homes, many boasting two cars and a boat in the driveway. Prior to 1985, there was no provision in the school for an AUS course, although students returning for Year 11 could take subjects for the Certificate of Secondary Education. The decision to provide for an AUS course was clearly the result of a change in Principal. Kennedy and Patterson (1986 p. 28) provide evidence about how important the role of the Principal can be in providing the impetus for AUS courses.

The course was established because it was found that there was no provision for those Year 11 students who were returning to school to "courses that were beyond their attainment". Consequently, there were a "lot of disgruntled kids" many of whom "were mixing with the wrong people, wagging school and drinking". The Principal decided that there should be a course for these students within their reach that "would lead to greater self-esteem". He approached one of his disaffected staff members, Peter, and encouraged him to develop and coordinate an AUS course. Peter was given a free hand and the facilities and expertise of the Schools Development Unit within the Education Department to plan the program.

In order that the course could commence, the Parents and Citizens Association at Grevillea and the school itself provided $2,000. Two demountable classrooms near the administration section of the school were made available and were fitted out with comfortable furniture, a refrigerator, some typewriters and a television set. An application was successfully made for Participation and Equity Program funding of $10,000.

The process of applying for Participation and Equity Program funds became part of the new learning experience itself. The process involved exploration of the aims of the AUS course and "what the students were to achieve". Students were invited to apply for the new course after an interview and after their parents had shown their willingness to support the course and what it would be eneavouring to do. Those students who were chosen usually had four basic passes in core subjects and a reasonable record in behaviour - or were at least rated as being "retrievable". Brighter students were discouraged from doing the course because it was felt that they would become bored and that they should be doing other Certificate of Secondary Education subjects if they were capable.

The curriculum provided for Mathematics, English, Science, Manual Arts, Home Economics, Business Education, Law, Life Skills, Bookkeeping and Recreation. "Sex education comes up in passing" Peter added. Remedial education was provided for. This course provides one of the few examples in Western Australia in which an AUS course actually has attempted to provide remediation in reading. Most people saw this as being beyond the scope of AUS courses.

The students turned their corner of the school into a pleasant outdoor area with the planning and construction of a pergola, barbeque and sets of outdoor furniture. They developed an enterprise in the preparation of numerous hanging baskets which they displayed under the pergola. They also used this area to provide hamburger lunches, thus displaying another of the skills that they had learned in the course.

The course made an impressive debut in the school and the students were succeeding, some by obtaining jobs, others by having fewer days absent or by simply "growing up and becoming more responsible".

Decisions Made at Grevillea for Implementation in 1986

The impact of the Beazley and McGaw Reports was to encourage a broadening of the subject offerings in the Year 11 timetable. In view of this,it was felt that some students who would be returning to school for the AUS program should be encouraged to attempt at least part of the regular offerings.

It was envisaged that three groups of students would be available in 1986:

1. A group of students doing all AUS subjects including Work Experience.

2. A group of students who would be permitted to take one subject from the Year 11 timetable. Subjects such as Local Area Studies, General English and General Mathematics were considered suitable. No allowance was made by the teachers of the regular Certificate of Secondary Education subjects for the AUS students.

3. A group of students taking three Certificate of Secondary Education subjects and AUS coursework. A typical timetable would be four periods of Life Skills (Social Education), 12 periods from the shool timetable and either Home Economics or Manual Arts. Peter was adamant that the students should be permitted to attempt only those subjects that he thought they could cope with and which would provide them with a broader scope (e.g., General Mathematics, General English and Local History).

The decision to integrate some of the course partially with the timetable was a new variation which was fully consistent with the Beazley Report. However, the staff at Grevillea were not too concerned about whether it was the correct decision. The potential loss of the personal contact with Peter was thought likely to be somewhat offset by the fact that there was to be only partial integration. But Work Experience was expected to suffer. In this sense, Grevillea had made the progression from the "separate sanctuary" idea of AUS as represented by Stratford to the partial integration of Bel Vista in just one school year.

Implementation Through 1986 at Grevillea

The Grevillea AUS course commenced in 1986 with 56 students in three classes, only one of which was totally with the coordinator, Peter. The other classes, whose students took up to three Certificate of Secondary Education subjects, spent a good deal of time with other teachers (up to four in the case of those students studying Home Economics). As Hall and Watts (1986, p. 76) found, too rapid an expansion of student numbers can serve to weaken this type of program. In retrospect, Peter argued that too many teachers were involved and that the positive changes seen in student attitudes, their acceptance of responsibility, their eagerness to participate and the development of higher self-esteem were delayed. The positive aspect of broadening the opportunities of the students largely was lost by the difficulties in achieving the sorts of psychosocial outcomes that the whole program was designed to engender. The loss, Peter argued, was too great and the gain was not commensurate. Of the 56 students who began, only 22 completed the year; however, it was reported that all had left for full-time employment. Because one of the measures of success of these programs is the number of students who leave for employment, the AUS course at Grevillea can be considered successful in 1986 on this criterion.

The AUS course did continue to have a high profile in the school. Any function catered for, any activity performed, any garden seat built was always shown as "prepared and presented by the AUS students". For Peter, the fairly strict discipline that he maintained over the group had to be rewarded through positive reinforcement; the recognition of the AUS students by the rest of the school was one such reinforcement.

Borrowing from the Bel Vista example of participation in Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme activities, Peter took his students on a cycling tour from Perth to Moore River, a return distance of some 400 kilometres. All received gold medals for courage and endurance. Such an adventure provided a challenge, a chance to do something outside the students' normal range of activities, a group activity and the opportunity for each individual to prove to him or herself that it could be done. It was a successful exercise in self-discipline.

Continuation in 1987 at Grevillea

In planning for 1987, the decision was made (based on the lessons of 1986) to restrict the student intake into the AUS. Once more the emphasis was to be placed on the "at risk" students who had a majority of "basic" (i.e., in the bottom 12% in Western Australia) or "no-award" results (i.e., in the bottom 2%) in Year 10 core subjects. According to this criterion, there would have been 8-10% of the Year 10 cohort, perhaps 50 students, who were eligible for the AUS course. In fact, 36 were enrolled in the AUS course. Only two classes were created and only one of these had some integration with the school timetable for Year 11.

Peter developed the AUS course until it became a school-within-a-school entity with the students operating largely independently of the main school. The principles of the course have been restated. In dealing with "at-risk", low-achieving students, the prime aims must be building attitudes, self-esteem and confidence, giving responsibility and developing communication skills. The students are continuing to operate the enterprises originally established:

maintenance of the school buses; simple automotive repairs; student canteen; horticulture; and outdoor furniture.

Unlike Jack at Casuarina, Peter is enthusiastic about the effectiveness of camps. Nine camps are planned for 1987 and hiking is a major feature. Peter now argues for greater time for physical education (up to 40 minutes each day) not only as a means for encouraging good health, but also to provide pride in one's appearance (an important aspect of the interview and ultimate employment goal).

Conclusion: Grevillea

The AUS course at Grevillea withstood its first test: the attempt to extend it and to take advantage of partial integration within the shool timetable was unsuccessful. Clearly, the independence given to Peter to operate his own program was paramount to its success. The intervention of other staff, however well-intentioned and achieved, was seen to dilute the effectiveness of the basic principles of the course. The experience of 1986 has made Peter determined to resist any future moves to integrate the AUS program.

DISCUSSION

The use of the qualitative evaluation methodology of Stake (1976) and Kemmis (1977) provides audiences with a portrayal of the educational program under consideration. For the present case study, there are several potential audiences including those intimately involved with the AUS courses within the four schools, those officers from within the educational policy-making bodies and teachers who wish to consider the application of the programs within their schools (and who can benefit by experiencing vicariously the successes and failures depicted). The longitudinal nature of the study has been a positive factor because it has shown that hasty conclusions, based on the portrayals of AUS courses in 1985, would have been erroneous. System change on the scale represented by the Beazley and McGaw Reports invariably takes time to be implemented at the school level. In this instance, the way in which schools reacted to system change was one of our orginal questions whose answer has altered over time. Although the portrayal methodology respects the integrity of the programs portrayed and becomes "the instrument for allowing readers to make up their own minds as to their worth and shortcomings" (Stake, 1979, p. 1), some conclusions about the success or otherwise of the decisions taken in relation to AUS courses are attempted below.

Educational change processes have been conceptualized by Fullan (1982) to consist of three phases: initiation, implementation and continuation. In the discussion below, evaluation of the decisions regarding AUS programs can be undertaken using this framework, which also allows some program comparison.

Initiation

> *The most immediate question is which factors influence whether or not changes get adopted in the first place. Answering this question will provide an important basis for understanding and the subsequent course of the changes. (Fullan, 1982, p. 41)*

The decision to commence an AUS course in a school is subject to many factors but in the case of three of the schools under study - Bel Vista, Casuarina and Stratford - the programs were underway prior to 1985. However, each underwent change in response to the Beazley and McGaw Reports.

The importance of key people in initiating program change has been recognized by Williams (1983), while Huberman (1983) especially emphasized the role of the Principal. At Bel Vista, the change from a discrete AUS course to one partially integrated with the Year 11 timetable was made partly as a result of the influence of a new staff member whose previous experiences made her question the need for the course in its present form, given the academic background of the students in the school. But that influence was supported by both the Deputy Principal and the AUS coordinator when it became apparent that Departmental policy might be about to change. While unhappy with the decision, the Principal felt that there was little choice for the school.

The decision to maintain the status quo at Stratford might be regarded as the initiation of a "wait-and-see" policy. The Principal supported the AUS discrete course because it was seen as serving a community need and providing an important public relations function within the local area. The fact that Stratford received additional Participation and Equity Program funds for a discrete AUS course was possibly an equally significant factor.

The process of change at Casuarina was much more complex. Here the Education Department itself had initiated change by approving the appointment of Jack to the position of Senior Master of AUS. Jack was a strong teacher who had a background in school-based change initiatives for the less academically able students and whose personal philosophy matched that of the Principal, who himself had a reputation for innovation. Their ideas on the educational needs of the students in this school foreshadowed much of what was to appear in the Beazley Report. For both Jack and the Principal, AUS courses were at best "band-aiding approaches" to the whole problem of curricular change, especially at the lower school level. The decision to move from a discrete AUS course to one that was integrated into the Year 11 timetable was in line with those ideas and found support in Karmel (1984, p. 36) who asked why, if such courses seem so good for these students, were they not available to all? The influence of the Beazley and McGaw Reports was to hasten and give support to the changes.

It has been found by Williams (1983) that school initiatives characterized by a sense of ownership and a strong commitment to success often arise from new awareness and insight by Principals and their staffs. New insight also might be provided by a new Principal with a different perspective. Certainly, the change in Principal at Grevillea must be regarded as the key to the establishment of the discrete AUS course in the face of the recommendations of the Beazley Report. But the climate within the school and its community also had to be receptive. Students from Grevillea had been enrolling in AUS courses in other schools; parents were concerned that their local school was not offering its students the same opportunities; teachers were aware that many students, who for a variety of reasons were returning to their Year 11 academic classes, had little hope of achieving success; the Deputy Principal saw the behavioural problems that resulted from the frustrations of the poor achievers; and the Principal was convinced of the need for the school to cater for the whole of its student population not just for a part of it. He commented that:

> *The decision was forced on me ... I was made painfully aware that there was a crying need for a course. We needed something for these students - something within their reach ... which would lead to greater self-esteem.*

The decision to initiate an AUS course at Grevillea was facilitated by the availability of Peter who was about to make a career change because of dissatisfaction with teaching but who was persuaded instead to accept the challenge of implementing the new course.

The strong commitment of the Grevillea staff to the course that was implemented arose out of the learning process involved in drawing up the course guidelines, establishing the philosophy of the program and working with the Department's Regional Office to investigate funding avenues.

The initiation phase in each of the schools highlighted the role of the Principal who must be responsible ultimately to the Education Department, to the school's clientele and to the local community for the suitability of the courses offered. At Grevillea and Casuarina, the role of the Principal was significant; at Stratford the Principal argued for the maintenance of the status quo; and at Bel Vista the Principal accepted a change which he regarded as inevitable. The importance of key "others" to the initiation of change was seen most clearly at Casuarina and Bel Vista.

Implementation

> *Implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities new to the people attempting or expected to change.* (Fullan, 1982, p. 54)

Because the decision at Stratford was to retain the provision of a discrete AUS program, there was little implementation (in Fullan's sense of the term) to be done. Minor adjustments were made to the program in light of experiences elsewhere. Hall and Watts (Fraser, 1986) describe the working of a "Link Course" whereby an AUS course was linked with a nearby technical college for the purpose of providing the students with a smorgasbord of practical classes in trades skills. While the technical college closest to Stratford was 90 kilometres away, it still was considered worthwhile to utilize the facility for one day every week for 10 weeks.

The decision taken at Bel Vista to integrate partially was based in part on a perception that, in spite of statements to the contrary, this was the course of action most favoured by the Education Department. It might have been the case that in this way the school retained the allowance for coordinator's time and access to Participation and Equity Program funding. But it also allowed for wider student participation in the worthwhile aspects of the program, especially Social Education. Partial integration also continued to provide within the school a home base which otherwise would have been lost for students. Students who had been seen as separate from the rest of the school were then much less clearly identifiable and the stigma previously attached to AUS courses largely disappeared.

However, if the implementation of the decision regarding partial integration brought to an end to the separateness of AUS, the students were equal losers from the point of view of camaraderie and security. The curtailing of the

Work Experience program as a result of integration, the ending of the Duke of Edinburgh Award projects and the loss of flexibility all were part of the changes. The comments of both teachers and students would seem to indicate that the solution was not entirely successful.

If partial integration at Bel Vista appeared to have some problems, then was total integration as at Casuarina any more successful? It already has been noted that the factors at Casuarina were different, especially in terms of the type of students involved and the commitment of the school to those "at risk". The school already had embarked on integration prior to the release of the Beazley and McGaw Reports. What was new was in the fine tuning of the program. The change in Jack's position from Senior Master of AUS to Senior Master of School-Based Curriculum Development, reflected the philosophy of the school and the reality of the situation. With the AUS course no longer a discrete entity, Jack's old position was redundant. But in a school endeavouring to provide a curriculum suited to returning non-academic students, there was an urgent need for something new. With the introduction of broad-based counselling, an effective year person system and a school-wide interventionist discipline program, the pastoral care needs of the students were provided for well. Where other schools had felt the loss of group-enhancing activities such as camps, Jack had eschewed them, preferring day excursions around a given topic or activity. At Casuarina, the implementation of the decision to integrate involved more than just the AUS course; it was a decision reflecting the needs of all of the school's students. If the AUS course had been so good for its students, had prevented absenteeism, had provided new enthusiasms about school, had improved the students' home lives and enhanced their life and job skills, then why should those benefits not be made available to <u>all</u> students? At Casuarina, it was not a rhetorical question. The school confronted the reality of the needs of its clientele.

In implementing its decision to establish an AUS course, Grevillea was required to consider not only the students involved, but also parents, employers and staff. The process of implementation was complex. Acceptance by the school staff of the planning principles of responsibility and Work Experience, set in a matrix of life-skills learning taught discretely from the rest of the school, was enhanced by expectation. On one level, an AUS course would remove trouble-makers from classes; on another level, it was seen that the school at last was doing something for its "at-risk" students. The Deputy Principal said of the initiation stage:

> *I didn't want an AUS course ... It would be like bigger Year 10 students ... behaving in a basic way. I wasn't looking forward to it ... There would be a lot of problems ... a lot of ill-feeling.*

But his comments changed later:

> *A lot of people's opinions have changed ... It didn't take long to decide it was good thing ... It took about one to two months to see the difference ... The ill-feeling has changed since they've seen what he's been doing. Discipline is much better in Year 11.*

The involvement of employers through the Work Experience program supported the curricular emphasis on responsibility and initiative. The close liaison between Peter and the employers involved in the Work Experience program ensured that employer views about the type of qualities desired in potential employees received attention in the school.

Peter's decision, which was supported by the school administration, was to provide a filter by choosing students for the AUS course rather than allowing a free selection. The course numbers had to be kept small to enable the maximum benefit to be derived from the pastoral care and attitudinal change program as planned. When the student accepted a place in the course, parents were invited to meet to discuss the program and asked to support the values it would be inculcating. Students also were required to sign a contract of obligation to the course and its principles. Thus, from the beginning, the students accepted responsibility for themselves and recognized that there were obligations. Part of the change alluded to by the Deputy Principal was the dramatic decline in truancy or in any form of behaviour requiring discipline by the front office staff. Peter's own forms of self-discipline, based on his previous experiences as a policeman and his faith in the ability of the students to respond positively to the responsibilities and obligations on them, seemed to be central to the changes. The students themselves were aware of the changes in their attitudes, as one remarked:

> *My parents' attitude has changed because I've matured a lot ... as in responsibilities ... handling them and carrying them out ... My parents are treating me more like an adult.*

The process of implementation did not proceed smoothly in any of the four schools. At Grevillea, where the greatest change occurred, it was assisted by the growing commitment to the program of the staff in general and of the Principal in particular. At Stratford, where the least change occurred, the decision not to change was largely that of the Principal, but that seemed merely to exacerbate the already marginal nature of the AUS course within the school community.

Continuation

> *Continuation ... involves such matters as incorporation in the budget, staffing, and extent and durability of the change.*
>
> *The problem of continuation is endemic to all new programs regardless of whether they arise from external initiatives or are internally developed.* (Fullan, 1982, p. 77)

Fullan suggests that for innovative changes to become a part of the normal school program they must have the continued support of the principal, support from systems-level managers and low staff turnover. Militating against such normalization would be the continuance of dependence on external funding sources. In their previous study, Hall and Watts (1986 p. 76) found that dependence on external funding sources (which in the AUS programs usually provided the increased staffing so necessary for the pastoral care activities) was a negative factor in teacher morale. While such programs remained dependent, they could be terminated by a political decision.

Of all the AUS programs considered, that of Stratford seemed most threatened at the end of 1985. Declining student numbers meant that the school would lose staff in 1986 and that some of that loss would be borne by those areas such as Home Economics, which serviced the Catering and Life Skills classes in the AUS course. But plans for the extension of the course to include Agriculture would utilize the skills of Trevor and, therefore, not require additional resources. The Principal was still supportive of the program and

of its Work Experience component, but he was unable to commit himself definitely to any increase in resources. One positive aspect was that both AUS coordinators would remain at the school, though their teaching duties would extend beyond the AUS programs.

The situation during 1986 did not assist the cause of the AUS course at Stratford. The numbers of Year 10 students who enrolled "just in case" they returned to school the next year indicated the need for two classes, one catering more for girls (with options in Early Childhood Studies and Catering) and the other catering for boys (with Agriculture). By "backing" the two classes on the timetable (i.e., having two consecutive timeslots, one for each class, devoted to a particular school subject), the school locked itself into an expensive non-viable situation if the numbers did not eventuate. In actuality, only 24 students enrolled and only 13 of these remained to the end of 1985. Options thus were destined to become underutilized and the teaching of them wasteful of resources. The integration in 1986 of the AUS students into the sporting sessions of the remainder of the Year 11 students paved the way for the decision to integrate for 1987. That decision was supported by the incoming Principal appointed upon the retirement of the former incumbent. Whether the decision to integrate would have been made if the change in Principal hadn't occurred is not a relevant question because the AUS course in its discrete form at Stratford had outlived its purpose. It was too expensive in terms of scarce resources at a time when other models of providing for the "at risk" student were available. Integration, however, can bring its own problems as Bel Vista has found already. Social Education is continuing at Stratford along with the need to provide for the Work Experience component of the course, although this provision will prove difficult given the demands of the academic subjects on the timetable. Betty's fears that the weaker students will be "lost" in the general Year 11 program reflect the same fears as those held by Dave at Bel Vista.

The problems of partial integration at Bel Vista, especially in the provision of a suitable period of Work Experience within the Social Education unit, increased throughout 1986. A similar situation prevailed at Casuarina, where a lateral solution to the problem was contemplated. If the timetable could not provide the flexibility for block release for work skills, then the concept of work might have to change. At Casuarina, Jack foreshadowed a change of direction for 1987 by suggesting that Work Experience might have to be redefined in terms of the students' current employment (e.g., part-time, week-end or after school). This is a pragmatic solution, but one which still could allow for the main aims of the course to be fulfilled without disrupting the students' study in the other subjects in the timetable. The decline in student numbers at Bel Vista for 1987 has meant that there is only one class of Social Education and Dave has taken a year's leave (necessitating that the program be taken over by another staff member). What provision is still made for the AUS course at Bel Vista is limited but probably serves the needs of most of the students.

However, at Casuarina, Jack is not sure that students' needs are being met. While the Social Education course has attracted enough students for three classes, and while the school's timetabling of General English after Social Education provides a large block of time (half a day) which could be utilized for outings of a limited nature and provided the same teacher for each, the needs of a good many more students could be met better if students were encouraged to enrol. The majority of the Casuarina students would benefit from the type of learning within the Social Education unit. Jack's dilemma

has been to persuade the counsellor and the other teachers to accept that many of the students whom they currently consider to be "too bright" for Social Education, in fact, would benefit from it. Integration was supposed to allow students the opportunity to achieve success, but the elite nature of the academic subjects serves to encourage parents and school officials to persuade students to attempt a course beyond either their ability or need. The dilemma Jack faces is in persuading the students otherwise. Unlike Peter at Grevillea, Jack does not have the clear option of inviting selected students to apply for the course.

The winding back of budgetary support from the central body also has impacted on the schools. The AUS unit at Grevillea has managed to build up a series of services within the school for which it charges (e.g., providing lunches, maintaining the school buses and servicing staff cars). Thus, the course is now largely financially independent at the school level, but it continues to depend on system support for its coordinator. The other programs will require some support from school funds for outings and for any staff allocation above that provided for within the staffing formula. In these three schools, the AUS program has become little more than the provision of Social Education classes.

Issues Raised

This study had as its core concern the impact of system change at the school level. How does a school respond to major changes beyond its control? Some issues arising from these case studies are considered below under the headings of (1) marginalization of students, (2) two-tier curriculum structure and (3) legitimization of school-based and curriculum decision-making.

1. Marginalization of Students. A study of transition programs (Fraser, 1986) showed clearly that the success of such add-on programs depends on the extent to which the students feel comfortable with a small group of teachers and with working largely in isolation from the rest of the school. But in making provision for a success-oriented environment, the school deprives those students of participation in the normal activities and rewards enjoyed by the remainder of students including sporting activities or certification processes. Kennedy (1986, p. 6) noted that, in this sense, "students appear to have been marginalized by the very processes designed to make school experiences meaningful and worthwhile".

Kemmis, Cole and Suggett (1983) suggested that add-on transition programs eventually could lead to school-wide change in some cases; that is, marginality could provide the flexibility that could allow the development of school-based curricula that would be seen to serve better the needs of all students, not just those in AUS courses. The experience of the four schools described in this paper gives mixed hope that this might be so. The vitality of the course at Grevillea shows that marginality, when handled correctly, can be very positive. Similarly, the philosophy at Casuarina offers some hope that whole-school support can overcome the disadvantages arising from the loss of the flexibility afforded by marginality.

2. Two-tier Curriculum Structure. Power (in Fensham, 1986, p. 256) asked:

To what degree do alternative programs represent an abandonment of the ideals of comprehensive education and a revival of the dual system of education with one curriculum deriving from the "high" culture of the middle class and the other given working class culture?

In promoting vocationalism and pastoralism at the possible expense of a liberal education, do alternative programs confirm and compound acceptance of human limitations and social realities?

Power's questions are provocative and were addressed by the Beazley Report. It was in recognition of these questions that Beazley made the recommendations that gave rise to this study. Yet, there is another side to the coin which has been seen in the responses of the four schools. Kennedy (1986, p. 7) asks: "Should schools be creating alternative tracks for 'less academic' students or should the entire senior secondary curriculum be the subject of reform?" Casuarina always maintained that any add-on program was "band-aiding" for the real problem - the unsuitable curriculum - and it set about within the new framework to provide school-based courses suited to the needs of its student clientele. Bel Vista and Stratford seem to have agreed that marginalization was not in the best interests of the students, but their reform has been limited so far. Grevillea, however, has argued strongly that the two-tier curriculum can be made to work in the students' favour: that is, although in the eyes of some sociologists it might reflect an unsatisfactory class bias, it does represent the best chance for rebuilding the self-esteem of "at-risk" students. The Grevillea case study contradicts Power's claim by showing that the two-tier curriculum has extended the abilities of the students. But it also might have shown that acceptance of the social reality in dealing with such students can be a positive, if pragmatic, decision.

At a conference of AUS coordinators (Linnane, 1985), partial integration was seen as "the way to go" because it would provide "the best of both worlds". Timetabling difficulties had been foreshadowed, but the advantages as pointed out many times by Beazley and Karmel were expected to outweigh the disadvantages. It might be concluded from the present case studies that such an optimistic view was not to be wholly justified.

3. Legitimization of School-Based Curriculum Decision-Making. The case studies have shown that school-based curricula can be effective in better providing for the needs of "at-risk" students. The acceptance of Jack's Social Education program at the system level has been of major significance. With the introduction of the reforms outlined in the recently announced Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement (Ministry of Education, 1987) by the re-vamped Ministry of Education, more emphasis will be placed on school-based decision-making in Western Australian schools. Schools will be required to implement a "school development plan" and provide for the involvement of the community in the decision-making process. The experience of the AUS programs provides a model to guide such a process.

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